



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Harpers Ferry Center

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## HFC Editorial Style Guide

January 2017

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Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) uses this style guide when preparing Unigrid brochures, waysides, exhibits, and other media. It supplements our primary style guide, *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The HFC guide includes terms and phrases specific to National Park System areas and decisions about recurring and commonly asked questions.

Entries that are new or revised are preceded by a bullet:

- **GPS coordinates**

### About editing

If you produce NPS publications, remember your audience is usually the general public—not colleagues, scholars, historians, scientists, or bureaucrats. Keep language and sentence structure simple. Apply the principles of Plain Language ([www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)), which are designed to make all government publications more understandable to everyone.

Examples of simple changes that make a big difference:

hours *not* current hours, hours of operation  
many *not* numerous  
get *not* obtain  
at *not* located at

### About editorial style

The English language and editorial style evolve. Do not rely on what you learned in school; check current word usage, grammatical trends, and spelling.

For questions of editorial style, we recommend this decision hierarchy:

1. HFC Editorial Style Guide
2. *The Chicago Manual of Style*
3. *Associated Press Stylebook*
4. GPO Style Manual

Use *The American Heritage Dictionary* for spelling.

If something isn't settled by these references, we discuss it and add our decision to HFC Editorial Style Guide. We welcome your questions; please send them to [hfc\\_editorial\\_style\\_guide@nps.gov](mailto:hfc_editorial_style_guide@nps.gov)

We recommend that you develop a style guide for your work. We recognize that park staff might disagree with HFC or the other recommended references. Add these points to your style guide. It will become a valued reference for you and your colleagues.

**Recommended references follow.**

## Recommended references

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th edition

Also available as an app and online at [ahdictionary.com](http://ahdictionary.com)

*Associated Press Stylebook*, 43rd edition

Updated annually; get one and stick with it for a few years. Also available online by subscription at [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com)

*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition

Also available online by subscription at [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)

• Denver Service Center Editorial Style Guide, 2014

[www.nps.gov/dsc/docs/DSC\\_EditingStyleGuide\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/dsc/docs/DSC_EditingStyleGuide_2014.pdf)

Use for technical and managerial publications like EAs, policy guidelines, etc.

*The Elements of Style*, William Strunk and E.B. White

Timeless discussion about editing and writing.

HFC Accessibility Guidelines, February 2012 [www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility) (formal name is Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media)

HFC Editorial Style Guide, January 2017

[www.nps.gov/hfc/products/pubs/HFCStyleGuide2017.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/pubs/HFCStyleGuide2017.pdf)

Use for all media intended for general public.

HFC Spanish Editorial Style Guide, July 2012

[www.nps.gov/hfc/products/pubs/pubs-04d.cfm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/pubs/pubs-04d.cfm)

Intellectual Property Guidelines for Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Media, William Blake, 2010

[www.hfc.nps.gov/acquisition.htm](http://www.hfc.nps.gov/acquisition.htm)

*The Mac Is Not a Typewriter*, Robin Williams

First published in 1989, this book offers sound advice for producing publications.

Plain Language Guidelines, March 2011 [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)

US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [geonames.usgs.gov](http://geonames.usgs.gov)

*US Government Printing Office Style Manual: An Official Guide to the Form and Style of Federal*

*Government Printing*, 2008, (aka GPO Style Manual) 30th edition in paperback, hardback, and CD-ROM versions. [bookstore.gpo.gov](http://bookstore.gpo.gov). Also at: [www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/index.html)

## A

**a or an** Choosing *a* or *an* depends on the sound of the word it precedes—not how the word is spelled. Use *a* before words beginning with a consonant sound, including *y* and *w*, no matter how the word is spelled. Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound.

a National Park Service regulation	an NPS regulation
a historic site	an <i>X-File</i> episode
a historic moment	an honor
a hysterical patient	an heir
a hoary marmot	an honest mistake

**abandoned** Avoid when writing about American Indian dwellings. *See* ruin.  
Ancestral Puebloan people left their homes in Chaco Canyon about 800 years ago.

**access** Avoid as a verb for “reach” or “get to” (word is too similar to accessible).  
You can get to Prince William Forest Park from the south via I-95.

**accessibility** Most new or revised Unigrid brochures include an accessibility statement. *See* service animals; *see also* HFC Accessibility Guidelines.

We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

**accessible** Use this adjective when referring to facilities, trails, campsites, (and more) that can be used by people using wheelchairs. *Do not* use when giving directions. *See also* disabled, hearing loss.  
The national seashore has accessible shelters for waterfowl hunters in wheelchairs.

**acknowledgment** *Not* acknowledgement.

**acronym** An acronym refers to a single, pronounceable word formed from the initial letters of a series of words from a name, title, or long term. North Atlantic Treaty Organization—NATO. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome—AIDS. *See* alpha code, initialism, NPS.

### Act, act of Congress

Adding these properties will require an act of Congress.  
*but* The Wilderness Act was signed into law in September 1964.

**A.D.** Avoid this religious reference. Use CE (common era) instead. *See* CE (for explanation), eras.

**addresses** Spell out street, road, way, and avenue in running text; abbreviate in a stacked address (each item on a separate line). Whenever possible, place address (and phone number) at end of paragraph. Write NW, SW, NE, SE. *See* state names.

20120 Cypress Ave.  
The White House is on Pennsylvania Avenue.  
16th Street NW

**administrative statement format** *See* National Park Service identity statement.

**African American** No hyphen. In text, first use “African American.” OK to use “black” thereafter.  
African Americans traveled north on the Underground Railroad.  
the African American soldier  
Maggie L. Walker was a leader in the African American community in the early 1900s and the first black to charter a bank.

### agencywide

***Air Force One*** Describes any aircraft carrying the US president, including helicopters. Italicize.

**alpha code** The four-letter code for a park.

**am** No periods, small letters (no capitals); style guides differ. *See* time of day.

**America** Use sparingly as a synonym for the United States of America; consider context.

**America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass**

*See* National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass.

**American** Use sparingly to describe people who live in the United States.

• **American Indian** Preferred. Some tribes (and their associated parks) prefer Native American. But use specific tribal name(s) whenever possible, accurate, and appropriate. *See also* First Nations, tribal names.

**American Revolution** Preferred; American Revolutionary War acceptable. In text, use one of these full titles first; “Revolution” acceptable thereafter.

**American Revolution affiliations** Lowercase patriot, loyalist, regulars, or tory (unless capitalized in quoted material). Capitalize Whig and Tory as members of political parties; Continental Army troops; Provincial regiments; British Army. Experts disagree about capitalization of American Revolutionary War terms; use park staff’s preference.

**Anasazi** Avoid, or clarify at first mention, *but* use the preference of specific groups or parks. *See* ancestral Puebloan people.

These ancestral Puebloan people, often called Anasazi, used ladders made of ponderosa pine to reach the canyon’s ledges.

**ancestral Puebloan people** Predecessors of today’s Pueblo and Hopi people; avoid Anasazi.

**and, &** HFC does *not* use the ampersand (&) in Unigrid brochures.

**angler** A person who fishes with hook and line. Avoid fisherman. *See* fisher.

**Anglo** Traditionally referred to white English-speaking Americans. In contemporary American usage, especially in the Southwest, it means anyone who is not Hispanic or Latino.

Anglos named the place Aztec.

**app** Lowercase unless part of a proper name like iTunes App Store. *See* iPhone, smartphone.

Use the NPS National Mall app to learn about memorials in our Nation’s Capital.

**archeology** *Not* archaeology.

**arms (small)** Firearms that can be carried in the hand, like muskets, pistols, rifles, carbines, and shotguns. *See* artillery. Remember your audience: The average person may not know this term, so explain or name the weapon if you can.

**Army, army** Capitalize when referring to an official, organized group and if it is part of a proper name; lowercase if used as a generic term.

Geronimo resisted the US Army for 16 years.

Fearing that the Chiricahua Apache leader would escape again, the federal government ordered army scouts to stand 24-hour watch.

The Army of the Cumberland was one of the principal Union forces.

**artillery** Large-caliber weapons like cannon, howitzers, and missile launchers, usually supported on a carriage and operated by crews. Remember your audience: The average person may not know this term, so explain or name the weapon if you can. *See* arms (small).

The Napoleon 12-pounder cannon was a popular artillery piece in the Union and Confederate armies.

**ATV** All-terrain vehicle; no need to spell out.

**audiovisual, AV** Avoid. *See* film, movie, program.

## B

**backcountry**

**bald cypress**

**B.C.** Avoid this religious reference; use BCE instead. *See* BCE, eras.

**BCE** Before common era; replaces B.C. Clarify at first mention. BCE and CE are preferred because they do not refer to a religion. They have been used for over a century and were preceded by other variations. *See also* CE (common era), dates, eras.

At Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site the earliest known people date from 11,000 to 6,000 BCE (before common era).

**biannual, biennial** Biannual means twice a year (like semiannual). Biennial means every two years.

**big game** Do *not* use. Say wildlife, animals, or be specific. *See* game.

**biological soil crust** Formerly called cryptobiotic crust. For details visit [www.soilcrust.org](http://www.soilcrust.org)

The biological soil crust at Arches National Park is alive, but it won't bite you.

**Biosphere Reserve** or International Biosphere Reserve. Capitalize this United Nations designation for areas that belong to an international network of reserves. *See also* World Heritage Site.

Mammoth Cave National Park, part of a major ecosystem that protects the diversity of life, was named an International Biosphere Reserve in 1990.

**birch bark, birchbark** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective.

You can see a birchbark storage basket at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Ojibwa taught French explorers how to build canoes from birch bark.

**birder, birding** *Not* birdwatcher or birdwatching.

Gateway National Recreation Area is a popular spot for birding, especially during the spring and fall migrations.

**bison** Commonly called buffalo. If writing bison, clarify at first mention.

Bison, commonly called buffalo, graze on this prairie.

**black-eyed Susan**

**boat launch** Preferred over boat ramp (ramps are paved; boat launches include paved and unpaved entrances). Be consistent with park signage.

**boundary, boundaries** A park may have one boundary or many boundaries. A *boundary* encloses a single, contiguous area. *Boundaries* enclose park areas that are not connected to each other; they may be separated by towns, sea channels, even states.

Today you can trace the paths of people seeking gold within the boundaries of Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park.

The California condor is just one of the endangered species that is protected within the park boundary.

**BP** Before present. Used in scholarly works. Avoid *but* spell out at first use. See BCE, CE, eras.

## C

**ca.** Avoid writing “ca.” or “circa” in running text—rewrite or use “about”—*but* use abbreviation in short caption or credit lines.

The pearlware bowl found at Ninety Six National Historic Site dates to about 1810.

Clara Barton ca. 1856; photo by Mathew Brady (*left*).

**cacti** Plural of cactus.

**campsite**

**campstove**

**Canada goose** *Not* Canadian goose.

**cannon** Cannon can be both singular and plural (same word, no *s*). Cannons is correct but used less often. Be consistent; use local preference. See artillery.

Many of the fort’s cannon were the type used on ships.

**capital, capitol** Spelled with an *a*—the city where a seat of government is located; do not capitalize except when referring to the Nation’s Capital. Spelled with an *o*—the building where the business of government takes place. Capitalize when referring to the US Capitol in Washington, DC.

Annapolis is the capital of Maryland.

The Virginia capitol is in Richmond.

Washington, DC, is the Nation’s Capital.

They stood on the steps of the US Capitol.

Capital Beltway *but* beltway

**capitalization** Avoid unnecessary capitals. Animal and plant names are lowercase unless they contain a proper name. Nouns are capitalized if part of a formal name, lowercase if they stand alone. If a term is plural following more than one proper name, it is lowercase (style guides differ). See geographic regions, specific words. For Spanish words, consult the HFC Spanish Editorial Style Guide and *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Douglas fir, Kentucky warbler

sea otter, great blue heron

... the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers

... on the Oregon and California trails

American colonies

Acadia National Park *but* the park

New York City *but* the city of New York

Wisconsin Ice Age *but* during the ice age

Ranger Baker *but* Ask a ranger.

Superintendent Walter *but* The superintendent is here.

Apache Visitor Center *but* at the visitor center

US government *but* federal government

**captions** Captions end with a period, labels do not. However, err on the side of consistency.

Major Ferguson addresses his troops before the battle.

Colonel Shelby, three hours before the battle.

Pinelands tree frog

**CE** Common era; replaces A.D. Clarify at first mention. CE and BCE are preferred because they do not refer to a religion. They have been used for over a century and were preceded by other variations. *See also* BCE (before common era), dates, eras.

These dwellings were built about 950 CE (common era).

**centennial, Centennial** Lower case when used alone or as an adjective *but* capitalize the official name of the event “National Park Service Centennial” or “NPS Centennial” when used as a proper noun or adjective.

The National Park Service Centennial was celebrated in 2016.

All parks, partners, and programs participated in the centennial.

Park rangers developed interpretive programs for the NPS Centennial.

Communities organized centennial events.

**century** Use actual dates—the 1500s *not* the 16th century. The latter requires mental translation for many people.

On to California! Since the mid-1800s the West had held out the promise of gold and boundless opportunity.

*not* Since the mid-19th century the West had held out the promise . . .

**chief justice** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

William Howard Taft, 27th US president, later became the 10th chief justice of the United States, the only person to have served in both offices.

**chronology or timeline format** Capitalize first word and end with period—even if entry is a sentence fragment. Write in present tense. Abbreviate words and eliminate articles when possible without introducing confusion.

1882: Born January 30, Hyde Park, NY.

1883: Organizes black student school strike, first such response in United States to unequal treatment.

**circa** Avoid. *See* ca.

**citations** HFC usually does not cite references in park brochures. Consult *Chicago Manual of Style*.

**civil rights movement**

The Selma to Montgomery march in 1965 was a climactic event of the modern civil rights movement.

**Civil War terminology**

**Confederacy**

George Meade finally launched an offensive that marked the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.

**Confederates—members of the Confederate army.**

For the Confederates, the triumph helped establish Lee and his army as the Confederacy’s greatest hope for ultimate victory.

**Federals—members of the Union army.**

**North—**use sparingly in referring to the US government during the Civil War, use United States of America, Union or Federal government.

**South—**use sparingly in referring to the 11 states that seceded; use Confederate States of America (formal name) or the Confederacy.

**Yankee—**do not use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material.

**Unionist—**do not use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material.

**Rebel—**do not use as a synonym for Confederate; avoid except in quoted material.

*See* federal, Confederate States of America, CSA.

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was a famous African American regiment in the Union Army.

## Cold War

**colon** A colon introduces something closely related to the sentence preceding the colon. Use sparingly. Use a full sentence before the colon. Capitalize the first word of a sentence following a colon; do not capitalize the first word of a list following a colon.

Make bread with these ingredients: flour, water, salt, sugar, and yeast.

*not* The ingredients you use to make bread are: flour, water, salt, sugar, and yeast.

The president promised results: "My new program, the War on Poverty, will help families in America."

**commander in chief** No hyphens. Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

**commas** Separate three or more items with commas (a style known as the serial or Oxford comma). Use a comma before a conjunction that joins two independent clauses (and, but, or, as). Unless needed for clarity, omit comma after short introductory phrases.

Our dessert choices are pie, cake, and ice cream.

Alfred lost the car keys, and the family is helping him search every cranny.

Around him the rolling hills and woods of the battlefield sprawl for miles.

**compass directions** Lowercase; capitalize only specific geographic regions, *but* try to limit capitals. *See* east, north, south, west, geographic regions.

**compound words** The trend is to eliminate hyphens once a compound word is in common use. Generally, follow *The American Heritage Dictionary*. *See* over 24 individual entries in this guide *and* compound words as modifiers.

**compound words as modifiers** Use a hyphen when combining two or more words to modify a noun, except when the first word ends in *ly*.

rust-resistant alloy but federally funded project

When two or more hyphenated compounds have a common basic element, retain all the hyphens.

4- to 5-ton trucks

8-, 10-, and 16-foot boards

moss- and ivy-covered walls

## concessioner

**Confederate** *See* Civil War terminology.

**Confederate States of America** Spell out at first use, OK to use "Confederacy" thereafter. Avoid CSA as an abbreviation; it more commonly means Confederate States Army. *See* CSA.

**Congressional Medal of Honor** *See* Medal of Honor.

**convince that** *But* persuade to.

• **coordinates** *See* GPS coordinates.

**copyright** Government publications are subject to copyright. Copyright usage has precise, legal regulations. Don't assume anything. Learn the basics at US Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov); consult Intellectual Property Rights for Harpers Ferry Center. *See* credit lines.

**cougar** Preferred; also mountain lion, panther, puma.



• **credit lines in publications** HFC credits images used in Unigrid brochures and other publications, even if NPS employees took them. We also reserve the right to edit a provider's preferred credit. All caps, small size, simple style. *See* copyright. Credits usually take one of these forms:

1. Creator of photo or artwork retains all rights:  
© KATHLEEN NORRIS COOK
2. Owner retains all rights:  
© THE GRANGER COLLECTION
3. Stock house supplied photo:  
© iStock / LAURENCE PARENT or iSTOCK / © LAURENCE PARENT
4. NPS commissioned photo or artwork but creator retains all rights:  
NPS / © LOUIS GLANZMAN
5. NPS commissioned photo or artwork and owns all rights:  
NPS / KEITH ROCCO
6. NPS employee made it as part of their duties:  
NPS / MARK MUSE
7. NPS employee takes a photo or creates art on their own time with their own equipment:  
© MARK MUSE
8. NPS owns photo or artwork, which is in its collection, but original maker is unknown:  
NPS
9. Institution allows use of a photo or artwork that they own:  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Note:* If artist or photographer is of historical importance, use the name in the caption (preferred) or in credit:

Edward Curtis photographed these Navajo riding east into Canyon de Chelly in 1904. [credit would read NATIONAL ARCHIVES]  
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY / GEORGE HAYWARD [no caption]

10. Someone other than the creator owns the photograph or artwork and donates the use of the image:  
COURTESY BOB SLEDD
11. Multiple credits. Separate descriptor and credit with em dash; separate credits with semicolon.  
BALD EAGLE—NPS; NAVAJO RUG—© LAURENCE PARENT; PORTRAIT—SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
LEFT—VALENTINE MUSEUM; CENTER—NATIONAL ARCHIVES; RIGHT—LIBRARY OF CONGRESS  
ALL IMAGES—NPS UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED

**credit lines in waysides and other exhibits** The park and the exhibit designer should decide where to place credits—with each image or together in a separate acknowledgment panel or notebook. Follow the style for brochures, above.

1. When the credits are on the exhibit to fulfill a requirement of the image's use rights license and it has no other interpretive value, use a font size smaller than the smallest interpretive text.
2. If the credit includes other information or has interpretive value (e.g. crediting a famous photographer), treat it more like a caption.
3. If the credits are placed on a separate acknowledgment panel, the font should be at least as large as the smallest interpretive text. They also should be repeated in a credit notebook containing details about the images, which is available at the information desk.

## crosscountry

**cryptobiotic crust** *See* biological soil crust.

**CSA** Confederate States Army; most commonly used after a person's name. Avoid using as an abbreviation for Confederate States of America. *See* Confederate States of America.

Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood, CSA, had a reputation for bravery and aggressiveness.

## D

**Dall sheep** Preferred; Dall's sheep: variant.

### dashes

1. **Em dash**—Longer than en dash or hyphen, often called simply “the dash.” Indicates a sudden change in thought or adds emphasis. No space before or after the em dash.  
Kings Mountain—named for an early settler and not for King George III—is a rocky spur of the Blue Ridge.
2. **En dash**—Longer than a hyphen and shorter than an em dash. Means “to,” “up to and including,” or “through.” There is no space before or after the en dash.  
1924–2005 *but* 1924–25  
8 am–5 pm  
pp. 38–45

**Note:** Watch parallel construction; don't mix and match written words and the en dash.

The visitor center is closed from October 15 to April 1.

*or* The visitor center is closed October 15–April 1.

*not* The visitor center is closed from October 15–April 1.

You may rent canoes between 9 am and 2 pm.

*or* You may rent canoes 9 am–2 pm.

*not* You may rent canoes between 9 am–2 pm.

*but* The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 71–29.

**dates** Write dates in this order: month, day, year. Use a comma before and after the year in sentences with full dates. No comma if using only month and year in a sentence. Do not use an apostrophe to indicate plural dates. *See* BCE, CE, century, eras.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers struck Pearl Harbor.

Five companies garrisoned Fort Sumter in June 1863.

1900s *not* 1900's

1950s and 1960s *not* 1950's and '60's

spirit of '76

**daylight saving time** *Not* daylight savings time.

The Navajo Reservation observes daylight saving time, but the rest of Arizona does not.

**day use, day-use** Two words if a noun; hyphenated if an adjective.

**degree** *See* temperature.

**departmentwide**

**Depression** *See* Great Depression.

**directions to reader** Put in parentheses and italicize entire item, including parentheses, *but* if text is set in italics, put direction in roman.

The core of L'Enfant's 1791 plan is the triangle created by the Capitol, the White House, and the Mall (*see map above*).

*The coat of the American black bear can be black, brown, or auburn* (left).

**disabled** Put the person before the disability; write persons or people with disabilities. Do *not* write handicapped. *See* hearing loss. More information in the HFC Accessibility Guidelines and at [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov).

The Longstocking Trail is wheelchair-accessible.

The C&O Canal National Historical Park has audio and video programs and large-print brochures for people with disabilities.

**discover, discoverers** Avoid in reference to lands already populated; rewrite in a way that includes multiple points of view. Explore, chart, venture, scout, are acceptable synonyms.

**Douglas fir, Douglas-fir** The hyphenated word is scientifically accurate because the species is not a true fir, *but* the unhyphenated name is more commonly used.

**during** Use “in” rather than “during,” if possible. It’s shorter.

## E

**Earth, earth** Earth is our planet; earth is soil or dirt.

**east, eastern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. Eastern Shore of Maryland; East Coast. *See* geographic regions.

**ellipsis** The omission of a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage is indicated by ellipsis dots (also called periods or points). Ellipsis dots must always appear together on the same line.

1. Ellipsis in the same sentence: Use three evenly spaced dots to indicate deleted material within the same sentence. Writers following *The Chicago Manual of Style* will take the time to produce the ellipsis manually. Write *space–dot–space–dot–space–dot–space*. *Note:* There is no period within the following sentence.

“If a stop cannot be put to these massacres, the country will be depopulated . . . as neither Whig nor Tory can live.” Nathanael Greene, 1780

2. Ellipsis within a paragraph: Paragraphs include sentences with punctuation marks like periods or question marks, but the three dots must still be spaced evenly (after or before those punctuation marks). If sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark, use it (to avoid ambiguity) and then three dots. Here is a condensation of President Nixon’s resignation speech using regular punctuation marks (periods at the end of sentences) and three dots to show omissions:

“In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I . . . tried to do what was best for the nation. . . . I have never been a quitter. . . . But as President, I must put the interest of America first. . . . Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.” Richard Nixon, August 8, 1974

**email addresses** Do not use capital letters unless address is case-sensitive  
mobydick@ocean.edu

**em dash, en dash** *See* dashes, hyphens.

**emergency statement** Bold, no colon, no period.  
Emergencies call 911

**en route**

**Engelmann spruce**

**enslaved** *Not* slave. Enslaved acknowledges the dignity of a human being; slave is a non-person, property. Avoid in captions and titles. In text, first use “enslaved.” Use slave sparingly thereafter. *See also* slaveholder.

The first enslaved laborers were brought to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, today’s Lower Manhattan, in 1629.

1619: Twenty Africans are sold into servitude in Jamestown, Virginia.

1857: Supreme Court’s Dred Scott v. Sandford decision. Judge Taney writes that an enslaved person is property and that only whites are US citizens.

Institutional slavery includes branding of the enslaved.

**ensure, insure** Ensure means to make certain; insure means to provide for insurance.  
Careful planning can help ensure an enjoyable crosscountry hike.  
The policy insures her life.

**eras** Use BCE (before common era) and CE (common era) instead of B.C. or A.D. Avoid BP (before present) unless writing for a scholarly audience. *See* BCE, CE, eras.  
The first people to settle permanently in the Tonto Basin arrived between 100 and 600 CE.

**European American** *Not* Euro-Americans. Be specific when possible.  
Sir Francis Drake, English mariner.  
Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Portuguese explorer.  
French missionaries and settlers from the East Coast.  
European Americans began mining . . .

**explorers** Refers to people venturing into territory unknown to them. Avoid “discoverers” unless that is truly the case. In certain cases, the term “travelers” may be appropriate. *See* discoverers.

## F

**farther, further** Farther refers to physical distance, further to an extension of time or quantity.  
Lydia walked farther than Mark along Cumberland Island’s shore.  
Thomas will look further into the disappearance of the office laptop.

### **federal, Federal**

1. Lower case: federal government, federal law, federal property, federal funds.
2. Capitalize:
  - a. in Civil War context (Federal soldier, Federal forces, Federal fort, Federal government)
  - b. the architectural style (Federal-style architecture of the late 1700s)
  - c. when part of a name (Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission)

**Federalist** Federalist Party; Federalist Papers.

**fewer, less** In general use *fewer* for numbers or individual items that can be counted; *less* for quantity and bulk.  
Fewer birds came to the feeder because Yuriko put out less food.

**film** Interchangeable with movie. Avoid audiovisual, presentation. *See* program.

**firearms regulations** Unigrid brochures usually include this statement because federal, state, and local laws apply and can vary.  
For firearms regulations check the park website.

### **firepit**

### **firewood**

**first-come, first-served** No need to write “*are on a first-come, first-served basis.*” Keep it short, be direct.  
Wolverine Campground is open year-round, first-come, first-served.

**first lady** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

**First Nation, First Nations** Refers to aboriginal people in Canada who are neither Inuit (people of the Canadian Arctic) nor Métis (descendants of First Nation people who married Europeans). Often used in the plural in the collective sense, as in a program for First Nations youth. The term is widely used in Canada but is *not* used in the US, except in connection with Métis whose homelands include northwest Minnesota, North Dakota, or other northern states. *See also* American Indian.

**fish, fishes** Fish (no *es*) can be singular or plural. Fishes (plural) is correct but used less often; it usually refers to more than one species.

We went fishing for brook trout and caught six fish. (Single species.)

Ichthyology is the study of fishes. (Many species.)

The Smithsonian Institution's fish collection, about four million specimens, is the largest in the world.

**fisher** Acceptable replacement for “fisherman” or reword to say how people are taking what kind of fish. *See* angler.

We went net-fishing for salmon.

Tribes on the Columbia River caught salmon with nets.

Those people are trawling for shrimp.

**fisherman** Avoid. *See* fisher, angler.

**flash flood**

**footwear, footgear**

**foreign words** Italicize unfamiliar foreign words or phrases; do not italicize familiar foreign words and phrases; enclose translation in quotes or parentheses, depending on context. *See* The American Heritage Dictionary *and* The Chicago Manual of Style.

She always had a *c'est la vie* attitude.

The word she wanted was *pêcher* (to sin) *not* *pêcher* (to fish).

The Kansas state motto is *ad astra per aspera*, commonly translated “a rough road leads to the stars.”

**Forest Service** *See* US Forest Service.

**four-wheel drive, 4-wheel drive, 4WD** Four-wheel-drive is preferred in interpretive text that modifies a trail or vehicle; on a map use the 4WD symbol or label as 4-wheel drive. *See* ORV, OSV.

Text: Most unpaved roads to the summit require a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

*but* Most unpaved roads to the summit require four-wheel drive.

Map: Unpaved road. 4-wheel-drive vehicles only.

**fractions** In text spell out if amounts are less than one, if standing alone, or if followed by “of a” or “of an”—use a hyphen between the words. Use fractions in unit modifiers (even if amount is less than one). Use glyph or symbol if available; otherwise try to stack numbers in the fraction:  $\frac{3}{8}$  (*not* 5/8).

In March three-fourths of the lake is open to anglers.

*not* In March  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the lake is open to anglers.

The beetle is three-quarters of an inch long.

The steep  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile hike takes about one hour round-trip.

*but* The steep trail is one-half mile long.

**freed, free** In the context of slavery, free refers to people never enslaved. Freed refers to formerly enslaved people. *See also* enslaved, slave/slavery.

**freedmen** Avoid unless in a quotation or title.

The Freedmen's Bureau was established to help formerly enslaved African Americans.

**fresh water, freshwater** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective. *See* salt water.

**frontcountry** Avoid if possible; it is jargon.

## G

**game** Do *not* use when referring to animals. Say wildlife, animals, or be specific.

**genus, species** See scientific names.

**geographic names** As a US government agency, NPS must use federally recognized place names in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) standardizes names of places, features, and areas in the 50 states and areas under US sovereignty, and for features in US territorial waters. [geonames.usgs.gov](http://geonames.usgs.gov)

1. Variant name—often historical or local names and misspellings; if using a variant, show the federally recognized name *first* and the variant *second*; the variant must be clearly distinguished as a variant (for example, put the variant name in parentheses or different type size or typeface).
2. Historical names—place names can be used in a historical context; watch out for names that use apostrophes and names that may be one or two words.

Sierra Nevada *not* Sierra Nevada Mountains

The Narrows *not* Verrazano Narrows (the water channel)

*but* the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge crosses The Narrows.

The Battle of Wilson's Creek took place along Wilsons Creek.

The courthouse in the village of Appomattox Court House was built in 1846.

**geographic regions** Minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names.

Northern California; Southern Appalachians; Bay Area; Upper Peninsula;

Pacific Northwest; Southwest; West Coast; East Coast; Midwest; Gulf Coast.

*but* the southern part of Louisiana; north of the national monument; etc.

***Giardia lamblia*** The organism; may be abbreviated *G. lamblia*.

**giardiasis** The illness caused by the *Giardia lamblia* organism.

### Gila monster

• **GPS coordinates** Add to park address in Unigrids if park requests and confirms the street address. Place after park website URL

[www.nps.gov/hfc](http://www.nps.gov/hfc); Lat. 39.323265, Long. -77.741109

**gray** The color *but* greyhound.

**Great Depression** Preferred. Use “Great Depression of the 1930s” if further clarification needed.

### groundhog

### groundwater

### guidebook

**guide dogs** Do not use. See service animals.

**guided hikes** See self-guiding trail.

**gull** *Not* seagull.

**guns** Can refer to anything from pistols to cannon, depending on context. Be specific. See artillery.

## H

**Harpers Ferry Center** *Not* the Harpers Ferry Center (no article).

**Hawai'i, island of** Use okina (glottal stop). *See* Hawaiian fonts.

**Hawaii, state of** Do not use okina (glottal stop). *See* Hawaiian fonts.

**Hawaiian fonts** NPS Rawlinson has the vowels with Hawaiian macrons as part of the font. Regular Frutiger Lt Std does not; use HFrutiger Lt Std. Request fonts from NPS Graphic Identity website, [www.nps.gov/hfc/services/identity](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/services/identity).

**Hawaiian words** Avoid adding apostrophe and s ('s) to Hawaiian words to form possessives. You must use Hawaiian fonts to spell Hawaiian words with macrons over vowels (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) and okina (glottal stops) (ʻ) in certain cases. These appear in several official park names and brochures.

*See* Hawaiian fonts.

The island of Pele *not* Pele's island.

The visitor center for the USS Arizona Memorial is a 45-minute drive from Waikīkī.

The trail will lead you past the Kaloko-Honokōhau and 'Aimakapā fishponds and the 'A'ōpio fishtrap.

**hearing loss** Or hard of hearing. *Not* hearing impaired. *Note:* neckloops is one word, no hyphen.

The film about George Washington Carver is captioned. Audio guides and neckloops are available for people with hearing loss.

## highcountry

**highway** Use official designation (as noted on maps); list official designation first and local name second in parentheses. For state route abbreviations use US postal codes. Abbreviate: Hwy.

I-75 (Alligator Alley)      NE 7 or NE Rt. 7 *not* State Route 7

US 1 *not* US Highway 1      39063 US Hwy. 95

US 1 (Highway 1)

**historic** Important, notable, or significant in history; usually refers to famous people, events, or sites. For example, a historic announcement might change the course of human events. *Note:* Historic and historical have different meanings; the words are often mistakenly interchanged. *See* historical.

The Old Courthouse was the site of the historic Supreme Court Dred Scott decision that proclaimed slaves were property and had no right to sue.

FDR's historic declaration on December 8, 1941, launched the United States into World War II.

**historical** Refers to whatever existed in the past; also refers to anything concerned with history or the study of the past. For example, a historical announcement is about something that happened in the past. *See* historic.

The ranger gave a historical lecture on Western trails at the campfire ring.

Jamie loves historical novels.

**holidays** Use actual dates not traditional names *but* Thanksgiving.

The park is closed Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1.

• **hookups** Common campground feature; no adjectives needed.

Fishing Bridge Campground has hookups.

**hyphens** *See* compound words, compound words as modifiers, dashes, word division.





**ice age** *But* Wisconsin Ice Age; Ice Age Reserve. There was more than one “ice age.” Be specific if you can.

**icefield**

**image** Avoid in text and credits. Be specific—photograph, illustration, painting, etc.

**image credits** *See* credits.

**in, within** Use “in” rather than “within,” if possible. It’s shorter.  
Wolves are protected in the park.

**Indian** *See* American Indian, First Nation.

**initialism** Abbreviation formed from initials of a name, title, or long term that is read as a series of letters: BBC, FDR, NPS. Avoid bureaucratic use of obscure initialisms. *See* acronym, ATV, NPS, ORV.

**initials** Franklin D. Roosevelt; FDR and JFK (no periods and no spaces); *but* W.E.B. Du Bois, P.D. James (periods, no spaces between initials), PO Box (no periods; space between O. and Box only). *But* Harry S Truman *or* Harry S. Truman; both are correct; be consistent.

**insure** *See* ensure.

**intellectual disability** *Not* mental retardation.  
Ask the park about activities for people with intellectual disabilities.

**International Biosphere Reserve** *See* Biosphere Reserve.

**international visitors** *Not* foreign visitors.

**Internet** Capitalize.

• **Internet address** Do not use capital letters unless address is case-sensitive. Avoid breaking at the end of a line; if you must, break in a logical place and do not add a hyphen. *See also* website.

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com); [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System and wilderness, visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).

**interpretive, interpreter** Define or avoid. Do not assume average person knows these terms. Use “park staff” instead.

Historical interpreters in period dress . . .

Park staff in period dress . . .

Park staff lead tours around the park.

**invasive species** *Not* alien or foreign (these have a negative connotation and can offend resident immigrants and international visitors). *See* [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov).

Invasive plants like faya and kahili ginger displace areas of Hawaiian forests.

**iPhone, iPod, iPad** Brand names beginning with a lowercase letter retain the lowercase even at the beginning of a sentence or heading. *See* app, smartphone.

iPod tours of Cupcake Corner National Historic Site are available for download.

**italics** *See* foreign words, captions, quotations, measurements, ships, and more.



## JKL

### **Japanese American** No hyphen.

In March 1942 Japanese Americans were transported under military guard to Manzanar, a war relocation center in California.

**Jet Ski®** A registered trademark; avoid using. *See* PWC.

• **job titles** *See* capitalization, titles.

**john boat, jon boat** A small flatbottomed boat with square ends used to navigate shallow rivers. Either spelling is correct; use park staff's preference.

**Joshua tree** *But* Joshua Tree National Park.

**Jr., Sr., III** Abbreviations like these are part of a person's full name. Do not use a comma before Jr. or Sr. unless it is required as part of the official name. If you do use a comma before Jr. or Sr.—and the sentence continues—follow the abbreviation with another comma.

Donald Duck Jr. has swimming privileges in Lake Crescent.

Jack Frost III stole the show with his lavish costume and acrobatic dance steps.

Tours at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site are first-come, first-served.

**judgment** *Not* judgement.

**Kemp's ridley sea turtle**

**kiva** Navajo word now in common use. Do not italicize.

• **LGBT, LGBTQ** Abbreviation for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender” and “queer” or “questioning.”

**lifeguard** An expert swimmer on duty to watch other swimmers; lifeguarded is acceptable adjective.

Seasonal lifeguard services are provided at Herring Cove.

Cape Cod National Seashore has lifeguard-protected beaches in summer.

Use lifeguarded beaches when possible.

**life jacket** *See* PFD, personal flotation device.

**lifesaving [station]** One word unless it is a historical or proper name or if local signage requires otherwise.

By the 1890s lifesaving stations were located every 3.5 miles along the New Jersey coast.

The Old Harbor Life-Saving Station at Cape Cod was built in 1897–98.

**-like** Spell solid when used as a suffix *but* use hyphen if the word ends with the letter “l.”  
birdlike, warlike, leaflike *but* tail-like, hill-like

**livestock** *But* pack animals.

**-log or -logue** Catalog, dialog, *but* monologue.

• **logos** HFC generally does not use agency, partner, or social media logos in Unigrid brochures. Some exceptions, like the National Park Foundation logo mandated by WASO.

**loyalist** *See* American Revolution affiliations.

## M

**map labels** *See* geographic names.

**map symbols, map terminology** Be precise when choosing terminology for map symbols. Be aware of subtle differences—gas station (sells gas, may sell snacks) and service station (sells gas and does repairs, may sell snacks). Download map symbols at [www.nps.gov/hfc/carto/map-symbols.cfm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/carto/map-symbols.cfm)

**measurements in text** Use English measure; spell out units of measure. *See also* numbers.

The shark weighed 32 pounds and was 80 inches long.

not The shark weighed 32 lb. and was 80 in. long

1. In text with specific measurements or when measurements are unit modifiers, the English measure is first, followed by the abbreviated metric equivalent in parentheses. Set metric in lowercase roman, use one space between the figure and the metric unit. Periods are not used with the metric abbreviation. Abbreviated symbol is always singular.  
At 20,320 feet (6,194 m) Mount McKinley is North America's highest peak.
2. Metric is used in text only if circumstances call for it—such circumstances might include parks with a high number of international visitors, scientific usage, or a specific request by a park.

**measurements on maps and charts** No period after the abbreviation; no space between numeral and symbol; name of topographic feature in italics; measurements in roman.

*Mount Rainier*

14411ft

4392m

**Medal of Honor** The official title for the highest honor awarded by the president of the United States to members of the US armed forces. *Not* the *Congressional* Medal of Honor.

Sgt. William H. Carney received the Medal of Honor in 1900.

**media** This plural noun takes a plural verb.

Harpers Ferry Center produces media that are used by national parks.

**metric** *See* measurements.

**Mexican War** *See* US-Mexican War.

**milepost** Lower case unless paired with mileage.

The milepost was buried in sand.

The ranger station is at Milepost 20.

**military ranks** Do not use “Brevet” in connection with any rank unless there is a reason for it and the term can be explained. *See also* military ranks in brochures *and* military ranks in wayside exhibits.

### Army

[5 Stars] General of the Army

[4 Stars] Gen. (General)

[3 Stars] Lt. Gen. (Lieutenant)

[2 Stars] Maj. Gen. (Major)

[1 Star] Brig. Gen. (Brigadier)

Col. (Colonel)

Lt. Col.

Maj.

Capt.

1st Lt. (First Lieutenant)

2nd Lt.

### Navy equivalent

Fleet Admiral

Adm. (Admiral)

Vice Adm.

Rear Adm. [upper]

Rear Adm. [lower]

Com. (Commodore)

Capt. (Captain)

Cmdr. (Commander)

Lt. Cmdr.

Lt.

Lt. jg (Junior Grade)

Ens. (Ensign)

**military ranks in brochures** Abbreviate rank when used with complete name, unless park requests it be spelled out. Spell out rank if used with last name only; in subsequent references, OK to use last name without rank. *See also* military ranks and military ranks in wayside exhibits.

Gen. Robert E. Lee; General Lee; Lee advanced

**military ranks in wayside exhibits** Spell out rank; subsequently OK to abbreviate or use last name without rank. When quoting someone use this formula: name, rank, military unit. *See also* military ranks and military ranks in brochures.

Fort Rosecrans was named for Major General William S. Rosecrans. His troops called Rosecrans “Old Rosy.”

**mission statement** The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our nation’s natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to tribes. The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

**money** Nine million dollars; \$35 million; \$35,000,000.

• **More Information format** Stack information on separate lines for easier reading. If a park name and designation needs two lines, keep proper name on first line and designation on second line. Abbreviate road designations. Add GPS coordinates only if park requests and confirms the street address. Otherwise, do not add email or GPS coordinates; both should be on the park website. *See* GPS coordinates.

**More Information**

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania  
National Military Park  
120 Chatham Ln.  
Fredericksburg, VA 22405-2508  
540-373-6122  
[www.nps.gov/frsp](http://www.nps.gov/frsp)

**more than** *See* over.

**mountain lion** *See* cougar.

**mountaintop**

**movie** Interchangeable with film. *See* film.

**mph** Abbreviation for miles per hour. No periods. Acceptable in all references.

**multimedia** *See* audiovisual, movie, program.

**mya** Million years ago. Avoid in text *but* spell out at first use.

## N

**nation** Do *not* capitalize *except* when referring to the Nation’s Capital. *See* capital.

**national park, national parks, national monuments** Lowercase unless part of a proper name. *See* capitalization.

Many national parks charge entrance fees.  
Congaree National Park is in South Carolina.  
Cabrillo and Lava Beds national monuments are in California.

**National Park Service** *Not* “the Park Service” (to avoid confusing with state and county parks).

**National Park Service identity statement** (In Unigrid brochures, make sure the park in question actually is an NPS unit before including this statement.) This may be shortened.

North Cascades is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

or To learn more about national parks, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

or Learn about national parks at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

**National Park System** *But* “the system.”

**National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass** This is sufficient; it is *not* necessary to preface with America the Beautiful.

**national seashore** *But* Fire Island National Seashore.

**nationwide**

**Native American** Avoid unless requested by specific tribes or parks. *See* American Indian.

**9/11** Acceptable in all references to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. *Also* Sept. 11, 2001.

**nonprofit** Refers to an organization with 501(c)3 status from the IRS. *Not* synonymous with not-for-profit—not all not-for-profit organizations have 501(c)3 status.

**North (the)** *See* Civil War terminology.

**north, northern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. *See* geographic regions.

Acadia National Park is northeast of Boston.

California's North Coast.

**NPS** Takes the article “the” if used as a noun. No article if used as an adjective. *See* acronym, initialism.

The Friends Foundation funds programs that are beyond the financial capacity of the NPS. (noun)

Parks acquire new acreage in accordance with applicable law and NPS policy. (adj.)

**numbers** In narrative text, spell out numbers one through nine; use figures for 10 or greater; spell out at the beginning of a sentence (regardless of amount), or rewrite.

Yesterday two mules slid off Bright Angel Trail.

The three hikers passed by eight overlooks and 15 waterfalls.

Forty-five species of birds are found in the park.

**In hike descriptions and other concise text, use figures regardless of amount.**

The hike is 3 miles roundtrip.

Begin your driving tour 5 miles south of the visitor center.

**Use commas within numbers greater than 999 (but not within dates).** *See* dates.

Over 1,000 bats live in Black Hole Cave.

Northern Plains Indians lived along the Upper Missouri River for over 9,000 years.

The smallpox epidemic of 1837 killed thousands of Northern Plains Indians.

## OP

**one way, one-way** Two words if noun; hyphenated if an adjective. Never write 1-way.

Cedar River Gorge is a one-way loop road that winds through old-growth forest.

There is more than one way to reach the campground.

**ORV** Off-road vehicle; no need to spell out.

**OSV** Over sand vehicle. Avoid. Use ORV unless park requests it, and then use their spelling.

The Over Sand Vehicle (OSV) zone at Assateague National Seashore provides an adventurous getaway.

Oversand vehicle operation at Fire Island National Season is regulated.

**over** Traditionally “over” referred to spatial relationships and “more than” referred to quantity and numerals. Today, “over” is preferred for both.

Over 1,100 men died in the battle.

We encountered winds of over 50 miles per hour as we flew over Snoqualmie Pass.

Trailers over 30 feet long are prohibited on Corkscrew Pass.

More than 800 brown pelicans flew over Anacapa Island.

**pack animals** *But* livestock.

**panther** *See* cougar.

**park** Refers to any unit in the National Park System.

1. Capitalize only when part of full name; lowercase when used alone.

Dry Tortugas National Park lies at the western end of the Florida Keys.

The national park needs your support to help protect the manatee.

2. Do not use to describe park staff activities and policies.

The park staff clears the roads in spring.

*not* The park clears the roads in spring.

**park area in more than one state** List states in alphabetical order separated by a space, forward slash, and a space.

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Kentucky / Tennessee / Virginia

**park boundary** *See* boundary, boundaries.

**parklands**

**park’s** Drop the possessive (apostrophe and s) when writing about the park website or park policies.

Check the park website.

The park firearms policy is posted in the visitor center.

**parkwide**

Interpretive planners made parkwide recommendations for Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front

National Historical Park.

**patriot** *See* American Revolution affiliations.

**pelt**

Tribal chiefs and leading warriors negotiated with traders at Fort Union Trading Post to get the best possible trade goods for their people. Popular exchanges included buffalo robes and beaver pelts for cloth, beads, pots, and guns.

**people, persons** Traditionally persons was used for small groups (three persons) and people with large groups (hundreds of people). Today it is acceptable to use people for small groups. *See* The Chicago Manual of Style.

Three people signed up for Spanish classes at Saguaro National Park.

**percent** Spell out “percent” in text (one space between numeral and spelled-out word); use % symbol in scientific writing and in tables (no space between numeral and symbol).

Visitation to the park’s hot springs increased this year by 25 percent.

**2011 Hantavirus Report**

Deer mice population on Minnie Island	1,000
Population testing positive for hantavirus	60%

**personal watercraft** In text spell out at first mention with PWC in parentheses; on map legends use symbol and spell out. *See* Jet Ski.

Personal watercraft (PWC) are considered vessels; you are responsible for knowing and observing regulations governing their use.

**PFD** Personal flotation device; spell out at first mention with PFD in parentheses.

Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when boating on Lake Roosevelt.

**photo credits** *See* credits.

**pinyon** Preferred; variant: piñon.

**pit house**

**pm** No periods, small letters (no capitals). *See* time of day.

**PO Box** No periods, space only between O and Box

**poisonous** Interchangeable with venomous in everyday use. Some biologists prefer venomous but poisonous is more easily understood.

Poisonous snakes live in the canyon. Watch where you put your hands and feet.

**possessive** Singular nouns take ’s (apostrophe and s) unless final consonant is “s.” Be consistent. *See* Hawaiian words, ships; consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

the cat’s tail

Grant Kohrs’ longhorns roamed the open range.

1. If a plural noun ends in s, add only an apostrophe.

The employees’ entrance is on the left.

Cannon fire set the officers’ quarters ablaze.

2. Plural nouns not ending in s, add ’s (apostrophe and s).

women’s rights

alumni’s feelings

**postcard**

**presentation** Avoid. *See* film, movie, program.

**presidency**

Roosevelt assumed the presidency at a time of great social ferment.

**President, president** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

President Clinton visited Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Earth Day, April 1998.

Lincoln was president during the Civil War.

**presidential** Lowercase unless used as part of a proper name.

Rosa Gonzales received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

**prickly pear cactus**

**program** Be specific if you can. *See* audiovisual, film, movie.

The campfire program will be this evening.

The ranger-led program begins at noon.

*not* The audiovisual program begins at noon.

**pronghorn** Pronghorn is not a true antelope; clarify at first mention with “often called antelope.”

**protecting park features** The standard Unigrid statement is below; elaborate as necessary.

*See* resource.

Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features in the park.

**PWC, personal watercraft** Spell out at first mention with PWC in parentheses. *See* Jet Ski.

## QR

**quotation marks** The period and comma always go within the quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation mark go within the quotation marks if they apply directly to the quoted material; they go outside if they apply to the whole sentence.

Gayle asked, “When does the next tour begin?”

Do you agree with the saying, “All is fair in love and war”?

Avoid overusing quotation marks to emphasize words and phrases. Acceptable uses include:

1. **Familiar word used in an unfamiliar way**  
Press the “Submit” button.
2. **Translation of a foreign phrase (which is italicized, *not* in quotes); *see also* foreign words**  
The Kansas state motto is *ad astra per aspera*, commonly translated “a rough road leads to the stars.”
3. **Ironic use of word**  
The “debate” turned into a free-for-all.
4. **Nickname inserted into the identification of a person**  
Sen. Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson  
*but* Babe Ruth, Dizzy Dean, Satchel Paige
5. **Unfamiliar word or expression**  
Trappers were after “soft gold”—the pelts of fur-bearing animals.
6. **Unfamiliar word, on first use but not thereafter**  
Broadcast frequencies are measured in “kilohertz,” but do you know what kilohertz means?

**quotations in publications** Display or headline type: set quotation in italics with no quotation marks (author credit in roman type). Always provide attribution (examples below) and date, if known.

A curious ensemble of wonderful features. John Wesley Powell, 1869

1. **Capitalize first word if quotation is a complete sentence or introduced with a colon or comma.**  
Lincoln said, “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.”
2. **Do not capitalize first word if quotation is fragmentary and placed in running text (without comma or colon).**  
Private Joseph Plumb Martin said troops at Valley Forge were “in danger of perishing.”

**quotations in waysides and other exhibits** Avoid italics. Use quotation marks instead, especially for quotations of more than a few words. When italics are used, be sure the italic font is easy to read. Quotes can also be distinguished from other text by using a different font, a different weight of the same font, a different color, or some other graphic treatment.

**rainforest** Preferred; rain forest: variant.

**ranger** *But* Ranger Baker.

**rebel** *See* Civil War terminology.

**red-tailed hawk**

**relic, relict** *Not* interchangeable. “Relic” is an object that has survived passage of time, often of cultural or religious significance; “relict” has specific meanings in mining, ecology, and law.

**representative** Lowercase unless used before a proper name. OK to abbreviate before a full name *but* spell out before a surname. *See* initials, military ranks, surnames, titles.

Representative Pinkerton began his first term in 1909.

Rep. Grant Pinkerton encouraged President Taft to sign the Arizona Statehood Act in 1912.

*but* The representative from Arizona is out of order.

**resource, resource protection** Use sparingly and in context when writing for the general public. Many people know only its primary meaning: “A material source of wealth . . . that occurs in a natural state and has economic value.”

Arrowheads are archeological features.

*not* Arrowheads are archeological resources.

**Revolutionary War** *See* American Revolution affiliations.

**Rio Grande** Rio Grande *River* is redundant; *río* means river in Spanish. OK to clarify word at first mention.

The Rio Grande (river) in Big Bend National Park is a designated National Wild and Scenic River.

**rivers** Columbia River *but* Columbia and Snake rivers.

**roundtrip**

**ruin** Acceptable *but* consider more specific word like dwelling, site, structure. *See* abandoned.

Ancestral Puebloan people built these dwellings over 1,000 years ago.

The 2.5-mile trail to White House Ruin is on the canyon’s South Rim Drive.

**RV** Abbreviation for recreational vehicle; no need to spell out.

RV parking is available at Stinky Skunk campground.

## S

**salt marsh, saltmarsh** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective.

**salt water, saltwater** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective. *See* fresh water.

**scientific names** Latin names of plants and animals (genus and species) are set in italic type. Always capitalize genus names, but never capitalize species names even if they are in a capitalized title. Divisions higher than genus (phylum, class, order, family) are set in roman type and are capitalized.

In late spring Atlantic horseshoe crabs, *Limulus polyphemus*, climb ashore in Delaware Bay, where females deposit eggs.

**seagulls** Incorrect. *See* gull.

**sea life, sea star** *But* seabird, seaside, starfish.



**self-guiding brochure, self-guiding trail** *Not* self-guided.

**senator** Lowercase unless used before a proper name. Spell out before a surname; OK to abbreviate before a full name. *See* titles.

Senator Truman began his second term in early 1941.

Sen. John Quincy Adams supported Thomas Jefferson in the Louisiana Purchase.

**service animals** Preferred term for guide or signal animals. *See* accessibility.

Pets are not allowed in the campground, but service animals are welcome.

**servicewide**

**settler** Avoid. It implies, incorrectly, that the area was uninhabited before that time. Emigrant may be an acceptable alternative, depending on context. *See* Anglo, European American, explorers.

**sexist language** Rewrite gracefully. Avoid “he/she.” *See also* subject/verb agreement.

work force *not* manpower

founders *not* founding fathers

crafted, worked *not* craftsmanship

Polychrome pottery specimens at Tonto National Monument are exquisitely crafted.

**shard** A piece of broken pottery, especially one found at an archeological site. Preferred over sherd.

Archeologists found Pueblo black mesa pottery shards strewn in the creek bed.

**she** A female; use “it” *not* “she” for a country, ship, or nature.

Portugal raised its flag over Macao for the last time in December 1999.

**Shenandoah Valley** *But* the valley.

**ships, aircraft, spacecraft, trains, vehicles**

1. Names of ships, aircraft, spacecraft, and artificial satellites are set in italics. Abbreviations before the name, if used, are set in roman and do not have periods. When forming the possessive the “s” is set in roman. *Note about ships:* Use “it” *not* “she.”

*USS Arizona* or *Arizona*, the ship

*but* *USS Arizona Memorial*, the place

*Missouri's turret*, *Challenger's crew*

*Sputnik* motivated the United States to take action.

*Air Force One* refers to any aircraft that carries the US president.

2. If the text is already set in italics, like some quotations and captions, then set the name in roman.

*Sputnik motivated the United States to take action.*

*The greatest loss was on board USS Arizona.*

3. Names of trains, vehicle classes or makes, and space programs are capitalized but not set in italics.

They rode the train called the City of New Orleans.

Chrysler Imperial

Project Mercury

4. Generic terms for vessels and aircraft are lowercase and roman.

submarine

space shuttle

**shuttle bus** *Not* shuttlebus. Be consistent with local signage.

**slack water, slackwater** Two words if a noun; one word if an adjective.

**slave, slavery** *See* enslaved.

**slaveholder** Someone who possessed enslaved people; preferred over slaveowner or slavemaster.

George Washington, slaveholder and first US president, requested that his enslaved workers be freed upon his death.

**slickrock**

**small game** Do *not* use. Say wildlife, animals, or be specific. *See* game.

**smartphone** Generic term for a mobile phone with computing ability and Internet connectivity.  
*See* app, iPhone.

At Manassas National Battlefield Park use your smartphone to download a battle app that features animated maps, photos, and videos.

**smoothbore**

**snake** *See* poisonous.

- **social media** HFC generally does not list social media by name or logo in the Unigrid brochures.  
Follow us on social media.

**song titles** Enclose in quotes.

Popular songs caught the temper of the times, from “jump” songs like “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy.”

**South (the)** *See* Civil War terminology.

**south, southern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. *See* geographic regions.

**spaces after subheads (titles) that start paragraphs** Use an en space after a subhead in a running paragraph. (Em spaces are usually too long.)

**Ranger-led Tours** Sign up for the wild cave tour at the visitor center.

**spaces at end of sentence** One space follows all closing punctuation.

**Spanish language** Use the HFC Spanish Editorial Style Guide and *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

**Spanish, Spaniard** Capitalize. Either is correct if referring to people. Spanish is used commonly today; Spaniard is more formal. Don’t use “the Spanish” as a collective noun if you mean “the Spanish governor,” “the Spanish colonists,” or “the Spanish people.”

**species** *See* scientific names.

**Sr.** *See* Jr.

**Star-Spangled Banner** The national anthem of the United States.

Francis Scott Key wrote the lyrics to the “Star-Spangled Banner” in 1814 after seeing the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, by British ships in the War of 1812.

**state** Lowercase: state government, state regulations, the state of Montana.

- **state abbreviations** Use two-letter US postal codes even in narrative text, highway names, and on maps. Can also be used in subtitles, depending on context. *See* highway.

- **state names** In running text spell out the names of states, territories, and possessions (except DC) when they follow the name of a city.

San Juan Island National Historical Park near Friday Harbor, Washington, also has beaches.

The War in the Pacific National Historical Park visitor center in Hagåtña, Guam, has exhibits about WWII.

Over three million people visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, each year.

**streets** Maple Street; *but* Cypress and Larch streets.

**subject/verb agreement** “Everyone (singular) will get their (plural) chance to see the cave” is acceptable to avoid gender-specific language. *See* sexist language.

**such as** Use “like” instead. It’s shorter.

**summer months** June, July, August. *See* winter months.

• **sun** Lowercase in all uses.

**superintendent** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.  
Superintendent Jones is retiring; an acting superintendent will be named soon.

**superlatives** Avoid. If using, confirm accuracy.

**supervolcano** Volcanic fields that can produce exceptionally large volcanic eruptions.  
You can learn about Yellowstone’s supervolcano at Canyon Visitor Education Center.

**surnames** Avoid Mr. and Mrs.; use full name (including initials), first and last names together, or last name alone. *See* titles.

Maggie L. Walker organized the first black student school strike in the US.  
*not* Maggie organized . . .  
Carl and Lilian Sandburg lived in North Carolina.  
Greene slipped away before dawn on June 20, 1781.  
*but* Dr. King [Martin Luther King, Jr.]

## T

**takeout, take out** One word if a noun or adjective. Two words if a verb.

Canoe trips on the Green River end at the Bubbly Spring takeout.  
Ranger Ruby said, “Quit wiggling, and I’ll take out your splinter.”

**telephone numbers** 123-456-7890 is preferred style (hyphens), but (123) 456-7890 is acceptable.  
Be consistent. *See also* TTY.

**telephone numbers, toll-free** Adding “1” before a toll-free number is not necessary for park publications because people will most likely be using cell phones, which don’t require the “1.”

**temperature** 32°F or 20–32°F in winter (en dash; no space after degree symbol).  
Expect temperatures in the 80s and 90s°F in summer.

**timberline** Avoid, use tree line. (Timber is a commodity term.)

**timeline format** *See* chronology.

**time of day** 8 am, 2 pm; spell out noon and midnight.  
At 4:30 am a mortar shell from Fort Johnson arced across the sky.  
She took the midnight train to Georgia.

**time zone** Lowercase the time zone name except for Pacific, which is a proper noun.  
The park is on central time.  
New Mexico is on mountain time.  
Point Reyes is on Pacific time.  
The Navajo Nation observes mountain daylight time while the rest of Arizona does not.

**tipi, teepee, tepee** HFC uses tipi unless a park's associated tribes prefer another spelling.

**titles** Lowercase unless used before a proper name. OK to abbreviate before a full name *but* spell out before a surname. Avoid Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Rev., etc., except Dr. King for Martin Luther King Jr. Generally, follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*. *See* individual entries in this guide. *See also* initials, military ranks, ships, surnames.

**Tory** *See* American Revolution affiliations.

**trail, Trail** Lowercase in general use *but* capitalize when the trail is the subject of the interpretive publication, exhibit, etc.

The self-guiding trail starts behind the visitor center.

The Appalachian Trail goes from Maine through Georgia. The Trail crosses 14 states.

## trailhead

- **tribal name** Use specific tribal name(s) whenever possible, accurate, and appropriate. Also preference is to use singular noun: Navajo, Lakota, Tlingit. *See also* American Indian.

The Navajo entered Canyon de Chelly about 300 years ago.

The Anishinaabek fished in Lake Superior.

**TTY** Text Telephone Service. *Do not* use TDD. Voice number precedes TTY number; if number is the same, follow the second example.

Call 301-123-4567, TTY 301-123-8910.

Call TTY/voice 301-412-1212.

## UV

**underground** *But* Underground Railroad.

**Union** *See* Civil War terminology.

**unique** Avoid; use only if truly one of a kind.

**United States, US** United States, a noun (spell out); US an adjective. *Note:* no periods in US, except in the black title banner of NPS graphic identity publications, then: U.S. Department of the Interior.

Lyndon B. Johnson was elected to the US Senate in 1948.

The United States is part of the North American continent.

**US Department of the Interior, Interior** *But* U.S. Department of the Interior in the black title banner of NPS graphic identity publications.

**US Forest Service, Forest Service, USFS** US Forest Service in first use to distinguish the agency from state entities; Forest Service or USFS thereafter. *Not* USDA Forest Service.

**US House of Representatives, the House, the lower house of Congress**

**US-Mexican War (1846–1848)**

The US-Mexican War began on May 13, 1846.

**US Senate, the Senate, the upper house of Congress**

**venomous** *See* poisonous.

**visitor** HFC avoids labeling people who are visiting the parks, preferring to use second-person or neutral words like “people.”

People enjoy swimming at the lifeguarded beach.

*not* Visitors enjoy swimming at the lifeguarded beach.

Guided tours are limited to 15 people.

*not* Guided tours are limited to 15 visitors.

**visitor center** Lowercase unless used before a proper name.

North Cascades Visitor Center opens soon.

Check at the visitor center for program times and descriptions.

## W

**wapiti** Avoid; use elk.

• **wayside** Avoid; use exhibit panel or information panel depending on context.

**website** The web, World Wide Web, and Internet. Addresses set in roman, not italic; “http://” not necessary.

For information about programs and activities at Yellowstone National Park visit [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell).

**west, western** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions or popular place names. Pacific Northwest; West Coast. *See* geographic regions.

**western red cedar**

**wetland** *Not* wet land.

**wheelchair** *See* accessible, disabled.

**wheelchair-accessible** Hyphenate even when not a modifier.

**Whig** *See* American Revolution affiliations.

**white-tailed deer** *Not* whitetailed or whitetail deer.

• **wilderness statement** This is the standard statement for Unigrid brochures; the last line is optional.

Congress has protected [acres or percent] of [park name] as wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Preserving wilderness shows restraint and humility, and benefits generations to come. Wilderness designation protects forever the land’s wilderness character, natural conditions, opportunities for solitude, and scientific, educational, and historical values. In wilderness people can sense being a part of the whole community of life on Earth.

Shorter option:

Congress has protected [acres or percent] of [park name] as wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System, visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).

**wildfire**

**wildlife** Can be singular or plural depending on context, *but* consider rewriting to avoid plural because it can seem incorrect.

**winter months** December, January, February *See* summer months.

**within, in** Use “in” rather than “within.” It’s shorter.

**word division** Minimize line breaks (aka word breaks) to increase readability. Divide according to natural pronunciation so that the part of the word left at end of line suggests the whole word. Consult *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

capac-ity *not* capa-city

ser-vice (formerly serv-ice)

**World Heritage Site** Capitalize this United Nations designation for internationally significant areas around the world. *See also* Biosphere Reserve.

Mammoth Cave National Park, part of a major ecosystem that protects the diversity of life, was named a World Heritage Site in 1991.

**World War I, First World War, WWI**

**World War II, Second World War, WWII** World Wars I and II; the two world wars.

## XYZ

**Yankee** *See* Civil War terminology.

**year-round**

**zip code**